

Message Text

SECRET

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43

ACTION SS-25

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O 041300Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4347

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T CAIRO 5534

EXDIS

EO 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PINT, SA

SUBJECT: NORTHROP RELATIONS WITH SAUDI ARABIA

REF: STATE 129796, CAIRO 5516

1. MET MORNING JUNE 4 WITH SAUDI AMBASSADOR NAZIR AND TOM BARGER, AT THEIR REQUEST, TO DISCUSS PROBLEMS THAT MIGHT ARISE FROM DISCLOSURE OF NORTHROP RELATIONS WITH SAUDI ARABIA. NAZIR SAID HE WAS SENT BY PRINCE SULTAN TO ASK IF THERE IS SOME WAY SUBCOMMITTEE COULD BE DISSUADED FROM ISSUING A PUBLIC REPORT ON THE SUBJECT AND TO SOLICIT ANY SUGGESTIONS ON HOW THE MATTER MIGHT BE HANDLED TO AVOID EMBARRASSEMENT. AMBASSADOR POINTED OUT THAT THERE IS NO RPT NO WAY EXECUTIVE BRANCH CAN INSTRUCT LEGISLATIVE BRANCH NOT TO ISSUE REPORT OF ITS FINDINGS. US CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS MAKE THIS IMPOSSIBLE. CONCEIVABLY SOME OF THE FRIENDLIER MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE MIGHT BE ASKED TO USE THEIR INFLUENCE TO AVOID SENSATIONALIZING THE REPORT IN A MANNER THAT WOULD BE EMBARRASSING TO SAUDI ARABIA, BUT EVEN THIS IS BY NO MEANS ASSURED. AMBASSADOR RECALLED THAT PRINCE SULTAN HAS DISMISSED OTHER SAUDI GENERAL OFFICERS IN THE PAST ON GROUNDS OF CORRUPTION AND WONDERED WHETHER SAUDIS MIGHT SUFFER LESS POTENTIAL EMBARRASSEMENT IF THEY TOOK INITIATIVE IN LETTING IT BE KNOWN PUBLICLY

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THEY ARE ACTIVELY INVESTIGATING ALLEGATIONS. NAZIR

INDICATED THIS HAS BEEN HIS THINKING AND THAT HE
HAS IN MIND RAISING THIS POSSIBILITY WITH
SULTAN LATER TODAY.

2. BARGER READ DRAFT LETTER TO ELLSWORTH WHICH HE
HAD PREPARED FOR SULTAN'S POSSIBLE USE, BUT AMBASSADOR
SUGGESTED HE DISCUSS MATTER WITH AMBASSADOR AKINS
BEXRE GIVING DRAFT TO PRINCE SULTAN. BARGER AGREED
TO DO SO. BOTH NAZIR AND BARGER EXPRESSED
ASTONISHMENT THAT ELLSWORTH LETTER SHOULD HAVE BEEN
SENT THROUGH THE OPEN MAILS RATHER THAN THROUGH
APPROPRIATE AND LONG ESTABLISHED GOVERNMENT TO
GOVERNMENT CHANNELS. IT WAS NOTED SAG HAS FOR MANY
YEARS PURCHASED LARGE AMOUNTS OF EQUIPMENT FROM
USG AND BY DOING SO HAS HELPED US BALANCE OF PAYMENTS.
SAG HAS RIGHT TO EXPECT THAT SENSITIVE MATTERS
INVOLVING RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES BE
HANDLED BY USG WITH SOME DISCRETION, HENCE ITS SURPRISE
AT ELLSWORTH ACTION.

3. BARGER PLANS FLY SAUDI ARABIA TODAY OR TOMORROW
TO WAIT IN JIDDA FOR POSSIBLE MEETING WITH PRINCE
SULTAN ON SATURDAY OR SUNDAY. SULTAN LEAVES FOR
SUEZ CANAL REOPENING TOMORROW MORNING, AND ACCORDING
NAZIR, SHOULD BE BACK IN SAUDI ARABIA ON SATURDAY.

4. COMMENT: I APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S HELPFUL
ACTION IN
REPEATING VARIOUS PERTINENT TELEGRAMS.
CLEARLY, HOWEVER, THIS IS A SUBJECT THAT SHOULD BE
HANDLED IN SAUDI ARABIA. ALTHOUGH I GATHER AT ONE
TIME YESTERDAY PRINCE SULTAN WAS TALKING ABOUT COMING
TO SEE ME ON THE MATTER, HE SUBSEQUENTLY DECIDED TO
SEND NAZIR. UNLESS DEPARTMENT THINKS OTHERWISE,
I SEE NO PURPOSE IN MY ASKING TO MEET WITH SULTAN
TO DISCUSS THE SUBJECT. HE IS, OF COURSE, AN OLD
COLLABORATOR FROM MY SAUDI DAYS AND IF THE OPPORTUNITY
PRESENTS ITSELF IN SUEZ CANAL AREA, I INTEND TO PAY
MY RESPECTS TO HIM. I DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT HE WOULD
RAISE SUBJECT WITH OTHER PEOPLE AROUND AND, UNLESS
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INSTRUCTED BY DEPARTMENT TO DO SO, I SEE NO VIRTURE
IN TAKING THE INITIATIVE. IF HE DOES RAISE IT, I
PROPOSE TO SPEAK ALONG LINES OF MY AFOREMENTIONED
TALK WITH NAZIR AND SUGGEST SUBJECT BEST DISCUSSED
WITH AMBASSADOR AKINS WHO IS AWARE OF ALL DETAILS
AND BEST ABLE COUNSEL HOW IT SHOULD BE HANDLED.
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